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ADDRESS

TO THE

ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON;

Delivered at the Anniversary, 21st May, 1838,

BY

WILLIAM R. HAMILTON, Esq., F.R.S.

President.

Gentlemen,

After the Report of the Council, which has been just read to you, on the Progress of Geography, and the labours of our Society for the promotion of that science during the past year—for which we are indebted, amongst many other most valuable services, to the indefatigable zeal and industry of your Secretary—I fear I may not have it in my power to present to your notice any subject of very new or commanding interest; and I may, perhaps, now and then expose myself to the charge of repetition: but as this is the first occasion on which an anniversary address has been read from the President's Chair to the Royal Geographical Society since its foundation under the auspices of his late Majesty, who on all occasions extended to us his high patronage, and expressed the warmest interest in our prosperity,—and as we have now entered the second septennium of our existence, under the no less fostering hand of our present most gracious Sovereign, the Lady Victoria, I beg to solicit your kind attention to the following remarks on the importance, use, and advance of Geography, and particularly on the benefits which we are fond to believe this branch of knowledge has derived from the institution of this Society.

Science itself is one grand characteristic mark—first, of man as a rational, reflective, and improveable being; and secondly, of man in a state of civilization. Improvement in science is that which, above all things, distinguishes one man from another—one nation from another—

one era from another; and in all the stages of civilized life it has been encouraged in proportion, sometimes to the wealth and extent of a nation, sometimes to the peculiar energies which have been developed in the individual inhabitants of one or other portion of the globe, at other times dependent on the accidental occurrence of taste, magnificence, vanities, and pride of a sovereign, but always in proportion to the liberties and security, whether of property or person, which have been enjoyed by the great mass of the body politic. In this honourable race of improvement, each department of science has had its fair turn, and in some fortunate epochas of the world all have flourished together.

These general observations are equally applicable to the moral, the political, and the æsthetical sciences; and whilst in the infancy of the world, when man could only range in a comparatively narrow sphere, it has naturally occurred, that the energies of the educated classes were limited to one or two branches of inquiry, we have seen, that for a certain period Poetry was the chief object of universal regard; History and the Fine Arts have succeeded, and have had their day of brilliancy and glory, Eloquence has attracted the voice and commanded the applause of literary thousands, the science of War has unfortunately been of all ages, and of all countries, Mathematics and Natural History have been fostered by republics and monarchies; and in addition to these—to come at once to more recent days—Chemistry, Astronomy, Geography, Metallurgy, Statistics, and Geology, have all their ardent votaries, and are rapidly advancing to a degree of perfection commensurate with the capacities of man.

But it is my business, Gentlemen, on the present occasion, to call your attention most particularly to Geography—as an honourable, useful, and highly meritorious pursuit.

Geography, as its name imports, is, in its simple sense, a delineation of the Earth—and would seem at the first blush to be a plain, easy, and, I might almost add, homely acquirement; but the result of experience, and a little reflection, prove to us that it is of a very opposite character: it involves, in the general acceptation of the term, the application of History, Astronomy, Geometry in its most extended sense, Natural Philosophy, Statistics, and to a certain degree, Geology. Before we can satisfactorily delineate and describe any one country, much more the whole globe which we inhabit, we must make ourselves well acquainted with the early inhabitants of its several divisions—the various migrations which have transferred the different hordes and tribes from one place to another, each successively driving out its predecessor—the various colonial establishments which have been planted, for the purposes of commerce or conquest, or for avoiding the evils of a superabundant population—the origin, progress, dispersion, and amalgamation of languages;—and, what is the most essential for the present time, we must know the various forms of government now existing—the different religious sects—the political and moral state of the inhabitants—their commercial and agricultural resources—their manufactures, arts, and usages: and all this from the lowest state of the savage, to the highest refinement of civilized life.

With these details we have to combine the range of coasts—the elevation of the different mountain ranges, from the great stony girdles of the globe to the humble hills and almost insensible undulations—the rocks—the volcanic phenomena, and alluvial districts, whether elevated in large irregular masses, or valleys formed by rivers; we must fix their localities and measure their relative heights. Every river and stream is to be traced from its numerous sources to its outlet in the ocean—each affluent and confluent must be distinctly laid down; the deltas and marshes must be surveyed; the precise site of every village, town, and city must be ascertained, and the whole corrected by trigonometrical admeasurements and celestial observations. But the geographer's task is not terminated with this list of labours on the inanimate world; he must likewise lay before us the different productions of the earth, diversified as they are by soil, climate, and exposure; he must describe to us all the varieties of animal life which that soil supports, from those which are invisible to the eye, to the lords of the forests, and to man himself. Here, indeed, other sciences and other inquirers will come to his assistance; but he must be the pioneer, who is to unlock the treasures which we want to possess; he is to point out the way which others are to go; he is to declare to us, " Here you may search, with the hope that your labours will not be unrewarded; here you will only waste your time, for you will find nothing to repay your toils."

In civilized and well-peopled countries, all this is comparatively easy; and nothing is required but the well-educated man of science, ardour in the pursuit of knowledge, accuracy of observation, and public or private encouragement. But the real geographer becomes at once an ardent traveller, indifferent whether he plunges into the burning heats of tropical deserts—plains, or swamps—or launches his boat on the unknown stream—or endures the hardship of an arctic climate, amidst perpetual snows and ice—or scales the almost inaccessible heights of the Chimborazo or the Himálaya. Buoyed up in his greatest difficulties by the consciousness that he is labouring for the good of his fellow-creatures, he feels delight in the reflection that he is upon ground hitherto untrodden by man—that every step he makes will serve to enlarge the sphere of human knowledge—and that he is laying up for himself a store of gratitude and of fame.

It would be needless in this Society to enumerate the names of all those whose successful toils in this career, within little more than half a century, have prompted the foregoing observations: those of Cook, Vancouver, Broughton, Grant, and Flinders; Bruce, Browne, Barrow, Ledyard, Parke, Tuckey, Bowdich, Lyon, Denham, Clapperton, Laing, the brothers Lander, Davidson; Valentia, Salt, Wilkinson, Hoskins, Burton, Grenville Temple; Owen, W. H. Smyth, Boteler, Vidal, Allen; Burchell, Campbell, Andrew Smith, and Alexander:—Rennell, Marsden, Horsburgh, Staunton, Raffles, Webb, Moorcroft, Colebrook, Forster, Ouseley, Malcolm, Clarke, Leake, Beaufort, Rich, Kinneir, Ker Porter, Irby and Mangles, Elphinstone, Christie, Pottinger, Morier, Fraser, Basil Hall, Burnes, Chesney, Sadleir, Wellsted, W. Hamilton, and Ainsworth: —Hearne, Mackenzie, Scoresby, Parry, Franklin, Richardson, Back, the two Rosses, Beechey, Elson, Dease, and Simpson:—Mawe, Smyth, Pentland, King, FitzRoy, and Darwin:—Weddell, Biscoe; Bass, Oxley, Cunningham, Sturt, and Mitchell, amongst our own countrymen, will occur to you; and it is highly to the honour of England that such a host of celebrated names, most of them our contemporaries, and almost all within the memory of some of us, have illustrated by their personal labour the geographical annals of our country. Amongst the foreigners of equal merit, we love to do justice to Niebuhr—to Humboldt, in whose name and works alone are comprised all the conceivable elements which make up a scientific traveller, geographer, chemist, naturalist, astronomer, and geologist—Bonpland, his adventurous, but less fortunate companion:—Bougainville, Condamine, La Perouse, D'Entrecasteaux, Baudin, Freycinet, Dumont D'Urville, Duperrey, Roussin, Laplace, Beautemps Beaupré, Bérard, and Blosseville; Beauchamp, Laborde, Jomard, Champollion, Caillaud, Caillié, D'Orbigny, Peytier, Callier, and Texier:—Ulloa, Tofiño, Malaspina, Espinosa, Quadra and Bauzá:—Belzoni, Rossellini, Inghirami; Siebold, Gråberg, Forsell, Hansteen, Graah:—Pallas, Krusenstern, Golownin, Kotzebue, Lütké, Wrangel, Meyendorf, Parrot, Engelhardt, Kupffer, Schubert:—Carver, Lewis, Clarke, Pike, Long, Cass, and Schoolcraft:—Von Buch, Rüppell, Horneman, Spix, Martius, Hügel, Erman, Pœppig, Meyen, Schomburgk, Ehrenberg, Rose, Eichwald, Gutzlaff, Gobat, Dubois de Montpéreux, and lastly Burckhardt, who spent nine years in Syria, Egypt, Nubia, and Arabia, in the employment of the Palestine Association; which Association, now incorporated in this Society, from its early foundation fairly deserves to be called the parent of institutions, having for their object the extension of Geography; and the great liberality of its members has set us a bright and encouraging example.

I would be out of place, on this occasion, to enter more at large on the beneficial influence which the labours of these Navigators and Travellers have had in promoting the wealth and commerce of the world—in extending the sphere of human happiness—in opening the benefits of civilization to myriads of human beings—in bringing us into communication with new worlds, and generally in hastening our approach to a full knowledge of the configuration of the globe. But besides these general, and in a measure speculative advantages from the progress of geography, it has, in connexion with hydrography, an immediate practical result in the preservation of human life, by giving us a more accurate and detailed knowledge of the depths, currents, rocks, straits, and shallows of the ocean, the discovery of new harbours, and a more intelligible and distinct delineation of coasts.

It may be attributed, in great part, to the success of the individuals I have enumerated, and to the reflection of how much more might have been effected by some of them, had they met with more direct support, and had been better instructed and guided in their pursuits—in part, also, to the example I have alluded to, set by the African Association more than fifty years ago, that we have seen during the last ten years the institution of societies similar to our own. I believe the honour of priority of date, in this respect, may be given to the Geographical Society of Paris, to which, in addition to their monthly bulletins, we are indebted for five volumes of highly interesting and valuable memoirs. Our own followed shortly in its track; and this again has given rise to the Geographical Society in Bombay, and to others, founded with similar objects, in Egypt, Berlin, and Frankfort.

To recapitulate the results which have flowed, in the progress of geographical knowledge, from the aid and countenance of the Royal Geographical Society of London, would be to give a catalogue or abstract of the papers published in our Journal. But we may briefly remark—first, That in respect to Europe, the division of the world in which most was already known, and less therefore required to be studied, we have consigned to our pages Colonel Baker's valuable Memoir on the Northern Frontier of Greece, founded on the labours of the Mixed Commission appointed by the Governments of England, Russia, and France, to determine, conjointly with the Turkish plenipotentiary, the limits between the Ottoman and the Greek rule. This memoir is also accompanied by a beautifully executed map; and it connects with the great French survey of the Morea and Northern Greece. A Map of Mount Athos and the adjoining coasts, resulting from the British surveys in the Mediterranean, deserves also our special notice: as well as the learned memoir, by the Dean of Wells, on the Periplus of the Euxine by Arrian, compared with the observations made in the Blonde frigate, in the year 1829–30; and that on the Gulf of Arta by Lieut. Wolfe, in 1830.

A short memoir in the eighth volume of the Journal upon the sites of Minoa and Nisæa, in the territory of Megara, affords a striking instance of the importance of a precise knowledge of the topographical details of a country for a clear understanding of its history; and though all the difficulties attending the question are not yet quite cleared up, yet it is fortunate that the attention of the literary critic and the scientific navigator should have been turned to a spot now so much frequented by our sailors and our travellers, that we may confidently expect that this minute point of comparative geography will not much longer remain a *vexata quæstio.* The difficulty seems first to have been mooted by the learned editor of Thucydides, Dr. Arnold, than whom this country can boast no better authority on such a subject, amongst those who have not had the advantage of bringing familiar acquaintance with the classical writers to bear upon a personal inspection of the locality.

There can be little doubt, however, that the position given by Mr. Spratt to the fortress of Minoa is the correct one, although, according to his own map, the distance between it and Megara is certainly something more than eight stadia; but the authority of Thucydides, which Mr. Spratt quotes for that distance, does not quite bear him out in his assertion; for the text of that historian only says that *Nisæa* (not Minoa) was eight stadia, in the line of the long walls, from Megara; and this accordingly makes Mr. Spratt's hypothesis still more tenable against the conjecture of Dr. Arnold, as his Minoa is to the south of Nisæa, and therefore farther from Megara. Nor need we lay any stress on the different denominations given to Minoa by Thucydides and Strabo, the former calling it an island, and the latter a promontory (ακρα), as the term island (νῆσος) was very frequently applied by the ancients to a promontory or peninsula joined to the main by low banks. There is a remarkable instance of this in the second book of Herodotus, where that historian describes a part of the city of Cnidos as being on the *island* of Triopium, whereas Triopium is, and must always have been, a promontory. Nor need we suppose, as Mr. Bloomfield conjectures, that what in the time of Thucydides was an island became a promontory five centuries after, in the time of Strabo; for Pausanias, who was posterior to Strabo, equally calls it an island.

Then, with regard to the discordance between Thucydides and Strabo, as to the distance between Megara and Nisæa, the former giving eight, and the latter eighteen stadia, it is much more likely that Strabo was in error, if the error be attributable to either, than Thucydides; or we may either suppose that Strabo wrote *δέκα ἢ ὄκτω*, ten or eight; or with Poppo, that *δὲκα καὶ* was inserted by some copyist; for it is most natural to conceive that the Megarensians would adopt this, the shortest line, for their walls, leading as it did to the nearest point on the coast, where there was a harbour; and Minoa was evidently close to Nisæa, commanding a view of the entrance into the port. Mr. Spratt's localities entirely agree with the whole narrative of Thucydides; and nothing remains to be explained but the five small islands which Strabo says lay between Minoa and Salamis, where there are now but four. This, however, is too trifling a difficulty to throw any doubt upon Mr. Spratt's hypothesis.

The accurate determination, by General Schubert, of 75 points on the shores of the Baltic, in the course of his chronometric expedition in 1833, and noticed in the 6th volume of "The Journal," forms a great addition to mathematical geography. Nor should we pass without notice Colonel Jackson's papers on the Congelation of the Neva at St. Petersburg, and the Temperature of its Waters when covered with Ice, as in some measure connected with geographical inquiry.

But I need not tell you, Gentlemen, that though much has been done, and much is still in progress, and notwithstanding the vast amount of topographical and hydrographical labours, which are enumerated in your Secretary's "Sketch," all is not yet, or likely to be soon accomplished, even in our own quarter of the globe. We have only to cast our eyes over the latest and best maps, executed either at home or abroad, and we shall see, without referring to the vast tracts comprehending the northern portion of Russia in Europe, bordering in part on the White Sea, and between the Gulf of Bothnia and the Ural Mountains, all the northern provinces of Turkey in Europe, comprising what were formerly known under the names of Mœsia, Dacia, Macedonia, Thrace, and Thessaly, are still very imperfectly delineated; and notwithstanding the valuable results of the labours of the Russian engineers in Wallachia, Bulgaria, and Roumelia, the active exertions of some of our own travellers, and the scientific surveys of the late French expedition into the Morea, the details of the interior of a large part of that peninsula still offer an abundant harvest to the geographer; nor will the maps of the interior provinces of Spain, Portugal, or Sicily, deserve a much higher commendation.

Italy still requires the conjoint labours of the antiquary, the historian, and the geographer, to clear up many disputed points of ancient towns, colonial establishments, and territorial divisions. The convulsions of nature have added to the difficulties of inquiries of this description. Much is still to be explored in Etruria, and in Magna Græcia; and it is only within a very few years that the precise line of the march of

Hannibal over the Alps—perhaps the most prominent feature in the ancient geography of this part of the world—has been partially elucidated by the industry of a few inquiring travellers.

What do we know of the immense continent of Africa? Some parts of the coast may have been minutely surveyed, especially those bordering on the Mediterranean ; but if we glance at the inland districts, the whole, with a few exceptions, is (geographically speaking) a dreary and unknown wilderness. The immediate neighbourhood of our own colony of the Cape of Good Hope, some of the more accessible parts of the coast of Barbary, a few points on the western coast of the Red Sea, some tracts of the adjoining desert, portions of the English and French possessions on the Gambia and Senegal, the banks of the Nile below the first or second cataract, Denham and Clapperton's routes to the Lake Chad, that of Park to Sego, and a glimpse of the lately-discovered banks of the Quorra and the Chadda, comprise nearly all we may be said (even imperfectly) to know throughout that portion of the globe. The last named of these events—the tracing of the river Quorra, by the brothers Lander, from Búsah to its outlet in the sea, a range of nearly six hundred miles—has indeed solved one of the most remarkable geographical problems which veil with mystery the interior of this vast continent; and its appearance in the first volume of our Journal gave rise to what may be described as the most masterly discussion by one of the best geographers in this country, that has perhaps appeared in our pages, viz. whether the river so discovered, one of the great arteries of the African continent, was really the Niger of the ancients. In the same year were also printed a brief account of a residence in the city of Marocco, by Captain Washington, as well as the first measurements on record of any of the loftier inland peaks of Mount Atlas. The narrative of the survey of all the northern part of the West Coast of Africa, by Captain Vidal and other officers of his Majesty's navy, is to be found in "The Journal," as well as those of the two recent expeditions of discovery into the interior from the Cape of Good Hope—one under Dr. A. Smith to the north-east, into the countries of the Matabili and the Baquainas; and the other under Captain Alexander, to the north-west, in which were explored the countries of the great Namáquas, and the Boschmans, as far as the river Kiusip, which enters the sea in Walvisch Bay, north of the 23° of south latitude, and thence eastward to the country of the Hill Dámaras.

The description of the African shores of the Red Sea, and the discovery of the ruins of Berenice, by Mr. Wellsted, and Mr. Wilkinson's account of the eastern desert bordering on Upper Egypt (the seat of many of the most valuable mines and quarries worked by the ancient Egyptians), Lord Prudhoe's memoranda of his journey from Cairo to Sennaar in 1829, have also added materially to our knowledge of these once populous and flourishing districts; and, whilst we are grateful to Sir Grenville Temple for his narrative of the route from Bonah to Konstantinah, and other geographical communications from that neighbourhood, we cannot pass over this part of the subject without a tear of regret at the untimely end of the gallant Davidson, in his unfortunate attempt to penetrate from Marocco over the Atlas to Tumbúktú.

Northern Africa still remains a fertile subject for discovery; and the recent expeditions of the French, which have put them in possession of Algiers and Konstantinah, promise to hasten the period for completing our knowledge of a vast extent of country, which attained a partial civilization at a very early period—where in time we may perhaps find the seeds of much of the historical mythology of the Greeks, which was overrun in various directions by the Roman arms, which was the grave of thousands of their troops before it became the scene of their greatest triumph, and which for centuries afterwards was the granary of Italy.

I cannot forbear availing myself of the occasion to announce to you that an expedition is in progress, and fitting out by the private subscription of individuals interested in African discovery, for penetrating up the Bahr el Abiad, or western and main confluent of the Nile. It is intended to intrust this task to a native of Dongola, who is under suitable instructions for the great object he is to undertake. The many fruitless attempts hitherto made by Europeans to explore this river, almost all of which have proved fatal, have prompted the idea of engaging a native of the country, as less exposed to the evils of the climate and to the hostility of the inhabitants. We have reason also to expect that various discoveries will shortly be made public from this quarter by Mr. Russegger, an Austrian mineralogist, who is at present in Abyssinia, and intended to prosecute his explorations to the banks of the Bahr el Abiad.

With the continent of Asia, the supposed cradle of the human race, but from whence, without entering upon the subject of the early emigrations of man, issued forth, within the historic period, those swarms of barbarians which overwhelmed the Empire of Rome, we are comparatively better acquainted. Our vast possessions in the East, the extensive commerce carried on between the European and the North American States and a large portion of this division of the globe, whether insular or continental, and the long and early connexion between the two continents, have brought us much into contact with the coasts and inhabitants of Asia. But even here, if we require positive data—if we look for anything like mathematical accuracy for the position of cities, the course of rivers, or the heights of mountains, we are sadly at a loss. Much has been done, and is still doing, to bring out a correct map of our own Indian possessions; many interesting portions of this vast continent have lately been laid open by the labours of enterprising travellers, and war, and trade, and politics from time to time go hand in hand in extending our knowledge of the interior. On this subject I cannot avoid pointing your attention to the very able Memoir by Captain Jervis, on the Origin and Progress and Present State of the Surveys in India, published in the seventh volume of our Journal. In the course of these Surveys, the most extensive, and perhaps the most accurate, measure of the earth ever attempted, has been successfully accomplished; Punnae on Cape Comorin, the southern extreme, being in 8° 9′ 38″ north latitude, and Kedar Kanta in the Himálaya Mountains in 31° 2′. The total therefore of the meridional arc thus measured is about one-sixteenth of the entire circumference of our globe.

Captain Johnston's account also of The Himálaya Mountains, and, more recently, Baron C. Hügel's Visit to Kashmír, have added much to our knowledge of that vast range, whose superior elevation above the Andes was first asserted by the lamented Colebrooke.

The mention of this name reminds us of the loss which the scientific world have experienced in the death of this eminent individual. Mr. Colebrooke was not a member of this Society, or his name would not have been passed over in silence amongst those whom we have lost during the last year; but just tributes to his memory have been paid in the Address of the Illustrious Vice Patron of this Society, as President of the Royal Society, as well as by the learned Professor, now presiding over the Geological Society. But Mr. Colebrooke, besides being a most distinguished linguist, particularly in the Oriental languages—and deeply versed in all the learning of the East, whether practical or theoretical, a sound lawyer, an experienced financier, and one of the founders of the Asiatic and Astronomical Societies in this country, added very considerably to our geographical knowledge of the Northern and North-Eastern Provinces of India.

The valuable papers on the Indus and on Sind, the Panjáb and Bucharia, by the well-known traveller Captain Burnes, are too fresh in the memory of those now present, to call for any special notice.

But we have only a very general knowledge of the geographical character of the Birman, Chinese, and Japan empires; the innumerable islands of the latter are still, except occasionally, inaccessible to European navigators. Geographers hardly venture on the most loose description of Thibet, Mongolia, or Chinese Tartary, Siam, and Cochin China. Persia, Turkey in Europe, and Arabia, have indeed been more or less travelled over, and their routes described by Europeans; and we are almost daily gratified with some accessions, characterised by various degrees of accuracy and distinctness, to our knowledge of these regions.

A paper by Mr. Bird, in the fourth volume of the Journal, on the Manners of the natives of the Southern Coast of Arabia and the Shores of the Red Sea, shows much observation united with research in Oriental literature; and we are indebted for the only descriptive accounts hitherto published of the Surveys of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, executed by the officers of the Indian Navy, to Lieutenant Wellsted, who has also deserved our best thanks for his Memoirs on the Island of Socotra, and on the Oasis of Omán in the Arabian territories of the Imám of Muskat, which had been partially described, though not visited, by Niebuhr.

The Survey of the Province of Azerbijan and of the Shores of the Caspian, by Colonel Monteith—who has also supplied us with the materials for a map of part of the Caucasian district—the accounts of journeys performed by officers attached to the several British missions in Persia, with heights of mountains northward of Tabriz and Tehran, and lately Colonel Shiel's Journey through a part of Kurdistan, are also very useful additions to our stock of geographical knowledge of Asia. But we must bear in mind that it is only within a very few years, within a period almost commensurate with the formation of this Society, that the two most celebrated rivers in Asia, the Indus and the Euphrates, have been navigated, and that by English officers, throughout their whole navigable course; the peninsulas of Arabia and Mount Sinai have only been partially traversed; the same may be said of the great empire of Persia; we only know from occasional routes the interior of that most interesting portion of this continent formerly called Asia Minor; and the great ranges of Imaus and the Hindú Kúsh are still little more than a terra incognita, notwithstanding the successful attempts of some of our most distinguished countrymen to penetrate across them. It is true that these countries attracted the curiosity of many ardent travellers,—I cannot designate them by the name of geographical travellers—in every century since the first dawn of letters and civilization in modern Europe; and they have contributed great accessions to our knowledge of the trade, manufactures, customs, and religious observances of their inhabitants. But it is only within a comparatively very limited period of time that accurate descriptions of the geographical features of the regions thus explored have been attempted, and still more recently have these descriptions been accompanied by their only true tests, geometrical admeasurement and astronomical observations: considerable progress has thus been made in verifying the comparative geography of this part of the globe, illustrious as it has been, more than any other, for revolutions of empires, the construction and demolition of the great monarchies of antiquity, the occasional and temporary introduction of European civilization by colonies from Greece, rapid conquests, and the birth-place of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. Much, however, still remains to be accomplished in this respect; and, amongst the prominent events of ancient history, which are still but imperfectly understood, from the superficial description of the countries traversed on these occasions (for geography is one of the eyes of history, as chronology is the other—bereft of either of them, it would become a vast mass of crude heterogeneous matter—"informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum"), we anxiously look for a more satisfactory illustration of the descent of Cyrus, the founder of the empire of Persia, from his native hills to the plains of Assyria and the shores of the Mediterranean, the military and civil constitution of the empire of Darius and Xerxes, as described by Herodotus, the march of the latter to the shores of the Hellespont, the expedition of Cyrus the younger from Ephesus to Babylon, and the Retreat of the Ten Thousand through the Gordyæan Hills to the Euxine, and thence, whether by sea or land, to the coasts of Bithynia and Thrace, on their return home—the march of Alexander, embracing the provinces of Asia Minor, traversed in various directions, the coast of Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, Assyria, to Persepolis, again in a north-westerly and north-easterly direction through the mountains of Media to the shores of the Caspian, through Parthia, Asia, Bactriana, and Sogdiana, to the Panjáb, his navigation of the Indus, and return with his army and fleet to Babylon. The long and sanguinary wars amongst the successors of Alexander, from the banks of the Nile to the Indus and the Ganges, still want the light of geography, as do also the conquests of the Romans, from their first hostilities with Antiochus of Syria, to the fixing the boundaries of their empire on the Euphrates and Tigris; and particularly the campaign of the Consul Manlius Vulso against the Gallo-Græcians, so fully detailed in Polybius and Livy, and those of Sylla and Lucullus against Mithridates, and of Crassus against the Parthians—the journey of Cicero to assume his proconsulate of Cilicia, the various expeditions of many of the Roman Emperors in this direction, from Trajan to Julian and Heraclius. We have then to illustrate the conquests of the Arabs, when the tide of war again began to flow from an easterly to a westerly direction, aided, as it was, in lowering the pride of Rome, by the successive invasions of Goths, Alani, and Huns, from the frontiers of China to the shores of the Atlantic and the coasts of Barbary. To these succeeded the gradual acquisitions of the Turks, from the Altai to Constantinople and the Danube, and the more or less ephemeral empires of the Tartars, spreading their desolating arms over eastern and western Asia, and the

Crusading expeditions from the Bosphorus to Antioch and Jerusalem. Very few details of any of these important events in the history of the world, and in that of the march, progressive or retrograde, of civilization, are as yet made perfectly clear to the understanding of those, who do not exclusively devote themselves to this study; and it is probably the case with these, in the study of geography, as with all others in the pursuit of every other science, the more they have acquired the more they feel the deficiency of what is yet to be learned. We must not, however, be backward in rendering the tribute of praise and thanks which is justly due, first, to the literary and scientific labours of a D'Anville, a Freret, a Rennell, a Vincent, a Marsden, and others, who in their closets have spent their most valuable hours in elucidating those knotty points of historical geography—nor to the more recent and more active researches of a Niebuhr, a Pococke, an Elphinstone, a Leake, a Moorcroft, a Burnes, a Chandler, a Gell, a W. Hamilton, a Chesney, and an Ainsworth. It is only a few days, since we have been gratified within these walls by the reading of a memoir by the last mentioned of these travellers, on a very minute but very important point in the country I am alluding to, namely, the exact sites of the passes between Asia Minor and Syria, known under the various denominations of the Cilician, the Syrian, and the Armenian Gates—a line of march which, from its being so frequently mentioned by historians, as that which was preferred to all others in the communication between the eastern and western parts of this continent, must have possessed advantages in a military and commercial point of view, which have not yet been sufficiently developed; but resulting as well from the nature of the countries to be traversed, as from the facility of commanding supplies for the support of armies.

I may also be permitted to add a special notice of the memoir in our Journal, of Mr. Brant's journey through parts of Armenia and Asia Minor, in 1835, and more recently of two memoirs, in 1837 and 1838, by Mr. W. Hamilton, which have materially added to our knowledge of the historical geography of Asia Minor. The last-named traveller has ascertained the sites of many ancient cities of much interest, as well by collecting and comparing medals and inscriptions, as by correct admeasurements of distances. This traveller was the first to find the descendants of the ancient Chalybes of Pontus still occupied in the same pursuit, as their ancestors of old, in the same spot, between the Thermodon and Cape Jasonium, and grubbing up the same rugged soil for iron, as Apollonius Rhodius describes them, *σιδηροφόρον στυφελὴν χθόνα γατομέοντας*. He has also given to us the most satisfactory account we yet possess of the physical geography of this peninsula, by measuring the heights of its table-lands, as well as of many of its mountains.

Much information may also shortly be expected on this part of the world from the forthcoming publications of MM. Callier and Texier, with the details of their discoveries in Asia Minor; and the French government have recently fitted out another expedition, with a view to classical and antiquarian researches on the same continent, under Mr. Raoul Rochette, already well known for his history of the ancient colonies of Greece.

The letters of Lord Lindsay, which I understand will soon make their appearance, will likewise furnish many very interesting notices on the most remarkable localities in Arabia Petræa, in the Hauran, and throughout Syria, illustrated by an observant eye and a well-stocked head. I have, at the same time, much satisfaction in announcing to you that Mr. Ainsworth, already so well known as the surgeon and geologist to the Euphrates expedition, and who has also greatly distinguished himself as a geographer, will shortly proceed, under instructions from the council, on an expedition into Kurdistan; and we may anticipate as the fruits of this journey, which will embrace a large portion of the basins of the Euphrates and the Tigris, most valuable accessions to our knowledge of a district abounding in objects of the highest interest to the historian, the geographer, and the Christian.

I cannot avoid making especial allusion to one subject of inquiry, highly important to a correct knowledge of historical or comparative geography. What volumes have not been written by the learned, who have given their attention to this subject, on the measures of the ancients,—their miles, their stadia, their parasangs, and their plethra; and how much we are still in the dark as to the precise length of any one of these terms? Did the various nations, and various tribes, or subdivisions of nations, as is pretended by some, each use its distinct measure under the same or different appellations? Did all the Greeks use one scale of admeasurement, and all the barbarians another? Can we attain any precise knowledge of these facts by the vague and apparently contradictory accounts of different authors? Were the smaller measures always aliquot parts of the larger? Is the confusion complained of by modern writers to be attributed to one or other of these causes, or to the ignorance and want of information in the ancient historians and geographers, or to the incorrectness of the transcribers of the manuscripts to which we refer? These are questions which require and deserve elucidation, and I trust we may shortly see some new lights thrown upon this difficult subject by a distinguished member of this Society.

In the mean time I have been invited by him to throw out the following hints for your consideration. Although almost all modern geographers—Rennell and Gosselin amongst the rest—have proceeded on the supposition that the Greeks made use of several kinds of stadia, varying from 696 to 750 to a degree, there are still good grounds for believing that this measure was in fact, at all times and in all countries, invariable, having been kept correct by the standard of the Στάδιον, or ground laid out for the foot-races at the solemn and periodical festivals throughout Greece. The extents of all these Σταδιὰ which have hitherto been measured are of one and the same length.

The distance from Olympia to Athens, reported by Herodotus to be 1485 stadia, and that from Olympia to Sparta, stated by Pausanias (vi. 17, 6), five centuries later, at 660 stadia, are shown by the latest maps to have been measured by the same stade.

Plutarch, also, in his life of Caius Gracchus, speaking of the milestones placed on the Roman roads by that public officer, remarks that a mile was equal to something less than eight stades. This is shown to be correct by the true Στάδιον, which is equal to 203 English yards.

The computed stadium in the Roman writers was subject to much variety: this arose partly from the Romans having adopted the stadium as synonymous with 600 feet; but as they of course measured by their own foot, which was one twenty-fifth less than the Greek foot, their stadium became less than the Greek stadium. It may partly also be attributed to negligence, and occasionally the contradictions we meet with may be owing to the corruption of the text; but one main cause of these differences was the ignorance which generally prevailed in ancient times of the real form of mountains, and the exact relative position of particular places.

The evidence of Censorinus as to these different stades with Greek names, opposed as it is to all Greek authorities, is entirely erroneous, or his hypothesis will apply only to Italy.

This is a subject that well deserves to be pursued under the advantages held out by the great improvements in modern science. Geography, as an exact science, must be founded on astronomy; it could therefore make little or no real progress amongst the ancients. Eratosthenes and Hipparchus had indeed improved upon the mathematicians of the time of Aristotle, as appears from the number of stades forming the aliquot parts of the degree of the great circle of the earth; but although Hipparchus had probably some better mode of measuring an angle than that described by Archimedes, yet without instruments of more delicate construction it was impossible to make much further advances either in geography or in astronomy, or these would inevitably have led to the discovery that trigonometry was the true basis of geography. When we consider how recent is our own knowledge of the true form of many—I may indeed say of *all*—countries, as far as we yet *do* know them, how continually we are even now misstating the real as well as the relative position of places, we need not wonder at the want of precision in the writings of the ancients on these matters. Nevertheless, after the labours of Hipparchus, and of those who attended to such subjects up to the third century of the Christian era, with the help, too, of a more extended navigation, and the practice introduced by the Romans of traversing in various directions the countries they conquered, by military roads, which exercised in every part of the empire the skill of the architect and engineer, they did obtain a certain degree of practical knowledge of relative sites; but the only real result to geography, as a science, was the compilation of Itineraries and Peripli, abounding in false computations and textual errors, the greater part of them being composed apparently by men of very limited acquirements even for those days.

Geography is, in truth, so peculiarly a progressive science that it may be described as a continual correction of errors; and approximations are always useful in degree; but as in astronomy these errors are, or at least must be considered, as the truth, until they are corrected, and as they furnish the only materials, and they are the only mode to further discovery, nothing can be more unphilosophical scientifically, or more unsound critically, though nothing is more common, than for geographers to condemn the labours of their predecessors, without adverting to the *history* of the geography of each country, which is scarcely ever attended to.

On the subject of the importance of geography to history we may mention also, as one object of praiseworthy study, the ascertaining the exact site of all the cities founded by Alexander during his conquest of Asia. This would materially tend to illustrate the moral and political effects of those memorable campaigns. A learned Dane, the Chevalier Bronsted, has undertaken this task, and he has very appropriately called in to his aid the science of Numismatics. He has collected for the Royal Numismatic Cabinet at Copenhagen, in the first place, all the original medals of Alexander which the pecuniary means at his disposal enabled him to purchase, and, where these were deficient, the casts of all others contained in the several public and private collections in this country and on the continent. A careful comparison of these most authentic documents, most of them varying as they do in the types and other marks, whether of time or place, imprinted upon them, will enable him to effect this service for historical geography in a manner which cannot fail to secure to this classical traveller the warm thanks of every lover of ancient art and ancient history.

The Society have already heard that the Council have awarded her Majesty's annual premium for Geographical Discovery to Col. Chesney of the Royal Artillery. Amidst several other distinguished travellers, whose names and merits in the cause were brought before them on this occasion, they thought that the claims of Col. Chesney were the most conspicuous: in the first place, and most especially, for the spirit with which, unassisted by any other encouragement than his own ardent mind, he accomplished his first survey of the Euphrates, and formed the project of the practicability of its navigation for commercial and political purposes, and at the same time added materially to our knowledge of the countries bordering on its banks; secondly, for the skill and perseverance with which, after much opposition, he effected this splendid enterprise, in which the discretion and prudence of the commander were as conspicuous as the zeal, energy, and ability, by which he was seconded in those who were placed under his direction; and, thirdly, for the great mass of new and valuable geographical and scientific information which he has brought home.

The details of this expedition are as yet only to be found in an abridged memoir of his proceedings, by Col. Chesney, inserted in the miscellaneous portion of our Journal for last year, and in the official papers laid upon the table of the two Houses of Parliament, besides a partial notice by Mr. Ainsworth, the naturalist appointed to accompany the expedition, which I have just alluded to.

I shall therefore only repeat to you on this occasion, in the words of your Secretary, that "Materials for a correct map of a large portion of Northern Syria have been collected; a line of levels was carried across from Iskanderún on the Mediterranean to Birehjík on the Euphrates, and thence to the Persian Gulf; Northern Mesopotamia was explored, and the grand survey of the river commenced with the descent of the two steamers, one of which was lost in the hurricane near 'Anah, and continued by the other to the embouchure of the river in the Persian Gulf. At a subsequent period two different ascents were made of the Karún, and two descents of the Bahamishír; while the country intervening between the Jeráhí and the Euphrates, the great delta of Susiana, concerning which so much that is incorrect is still in our maps, was examined. The river Tigris was twice ascended to upwards of 400 miles beyond its junction with the Euphrates; a second line of levels was carried between the Euphrates and the Tigris; new positions obtained by the journeys across the deserts; and a geological section of the Taurus, of several hundred miles in extent, were amongst the last of the successful labours of the expedition."

After a perusal of this very interesting memoir, the Council felt that there was no necessity (and I am confident that the Society will coincide in that conviction) to wait for the publication of the full details of the expedition, till they should give to Col. Chesney the stamp of their approbation, and, I may add, their admiration, of his conduct throughout, as commander of the expedition, by awarding to him the royal premium for the year 1837.

They were anxious, also, to seize the first opportunity in their power to show how fully they joined in the expressions used by one of their body, who, when noticing some years ago Colonel Chesney's first reports on the navigation of the Euphrates, commenced his observations by saying, that "Whilst new parts of the world are daily becoming better known through European enterprise, many most interesting portions of the Ancient World would seem likely to be forgotten or neglected, though, both for their physical character and the historical recollections attached to them, they furnish materials as ample for the inquirer into natural phenomena, and infinitely more abundant for him who studies the history of man, and the revolutions of political societies."

But whilst we are thus collecting materials, and encouraging farther researches towards a more correct knowledge of the most remarkable periods in the history of the Ancient World, we are not therefore to shut our eyes to objects of more immediate and daily interest. A still wider field here opens to our view. Instead of unlocking the lost or hidden treasures of antiquity, and only now and then obtaining a result which may compensate for our labours, we have the sure prospect of a rich harvest. The vast untrodden steppes in the interior of Africa may be pregnant with objects of interest in the vegetable or mineral kingdom, which, with the progress of discovery, may open out new sources of wealth to our commercial adventurers, whilst the inhabitants, we may hope, will in the fulness of time be ready to receive the blessings of liberty, civilization, and religion, which we may impart to them; and I have already alluded to the first navigation of the Niger or Quorra, as being one of the most remarkable conquests, which have been gained in our time by the arts of peace and honourable enterprise.

But it is in the New World or Worlds that the great field of geographical discovery is still to be cultivated. And here also the pages of our Journal may be consulted with advantage. The setting on foot of the Arctic Land Expedition in 1832, in search of Captain Sir John Ross and his adventurous companions, may be noted as one of the useful abours of the Society; and the Journal contains the first account of the results of that expedition in the discovery of the great river which flows from the Great Slave Lake, in a north-east direction, into the open sea, nearly ninety miles south of the Boothia of Captain Ross, with the current flowing into it from the westward, and which river now justly bears the name of "Back."

The opinions also of some of our most celebrated navigators, urging another expedition of discovery, in which the Society took an active part, will be found in the annals of the year 1836. An account also of the monuments and relics of the ancient inhabitants of New Spain will fully repay the time bestowed upon it. I may observe in passing, that these monuments offer a very remarkable coincidence with phenomena long since observed in the Ancient World, denoting the existence of a race of men who seem to have chiefly occupied themselves (in a state of civilization of which we have no records, and of which we can form no plausible conjecture) in raising edifices of enormous grandeur, and almost imperishable strength: such, I mean, as the ancient Treasuries of Mycenæ, and Erchomenos in Greece, the Cyclopean Walls of Tyrins, Stonehenge and Abury in our own island, the Cromlech Circles at Carrowmore in Ireland, and the innumerable pillars of Carnac on the coast of Brittany in France.

But to return from this digression. In South America, King's and Fitz-Roy's Account of the Ten Years' Survey of the Shores and Rivers of Patagonia, Chile, and Peru, stands prominently in relief: the brief but comprehensive Summary of the Voyage of the Beagle, which contains every result that can be useful to the seaman, and was published only a few days after the arrival of the ship in England, may be held up as a model, and as an example well worthy of imitation by all voyagers and travellers.

A brief account of the Bolivian Andes, by Mr. Pentland; of the Affluents of the Amazons, and of the descent of this river from Peru to Para, by Captain Smyth; of the exploration of the rivers Santa Cruz and Negro, in Patagonia, by Captain Fitz-Roy and Villariño; an abstract of the documents now publishing by Don Pedro de Angelis, at Buenos Ayres, and prepared for the Society by Sir W. Parish, and the very full reports of Mr. Schomburgk of his discoveries in British Guayana, by which very large and important additions have been made to the available resources of that flourishing colony, are amongst the chief contents of the Society's Journal relating to this quarter of the world. I may here add that the last accounts received from Mr. Schomburgk, whose scientific labours have received the warm applause of Alexander von Humboldt, hold out the promise of his being able during this year to effectuate the passage of the mountains, which separate British Guayana from the Basin of the Amazons, and eventually to reach Esmeralda on the Oronoco, and thus unite his labours with those of Humboldt, who has lately given, in the "Annales Maritimes" for the last year, some very valuable notices on the geography of Guayana, in the fullest acceptation of that term.

The only complete account of the progress of inland discovery in Australia, during the later times, is to be found in the Society's Journal. A general view is also there given of the state of discovery in Australia in the year 1833, drawn up by Mr. A. Cunningham, at the desire of his late Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies; and has been succeeded by Major Mitchell's narratives of his expeditions into the interior, that of the establishments at Melville Island and Port Essington, and some account of the settlement at Swan River.

An attempt has also been made, in which the Council depend on the Society's warm concurrence, to introduce into this large portion of our colonial possessions a more accurate and appropriate nomenclature, applicable to its principal divisions.

We look with great anxiety for the results of the exploring expedition from the north-west coast of Australia, under Lieutenants Grey and Lushington.

Whilst upon the late discoveries in this part of the world, I have much pleasure in announcing to you, that information was received only two days ago, that the river Murray, on the south coast of Australia, has been found to have an open navigable mouth, with four fathoms water at its entrance, flowing into the sea at Encounter Bay, and joining the eastern side of Lake Alexandrina. Mr. Sturt, the first discoverer of this river and lake, in 1833, appears to have only missed this outlet by keeping to the western side of the lake.

In the Antarctic Ocean, the discovery of two masses of land, in long. 47° E. and 67° W., in the year 1833, by Mr. Biscoe, to whom one of our gold medals has been awarded, was first made known in the pages of our Journal; as were also the narratives of two visits to the islands of the Pacific Ocean—viz., one by Captain Waldegrave in 1833, and that by Mr. Bennett in 1836.

As intimately connected with some of the higher departments of geographical science, I must not omit to mention how much we are indebted to the learned investigations of the late Baron William von Humboldt, the worthy rival of his distinguished brother, on lingual and ethnological affinities, particularly in reference to the Malay languages, used more or less over the Polynesian Islands, which were noticed in the seventh volume of our Journal. Admiral Krusenstern also has conferred an essential benefit on the nautical world, by his corrections of our charts of the Pacific Ocean, where numerous islands have been discovered, and many important points fixed by astronomical observations.

Having taken this cursory and very imperfect review of what has been done, is doing, and may be expected to be done, in promoting geographical knowledge—either by sending out expeditions, or by proffering the means of spreading the results of expeditions, under the auspices of the Society—it can scarcely be said that the Society has not, in part at least, fulfilled the promises held out when it was first formed, or that it has not honourably exerted itself in the task which it undertook. Nor can it be maintained that a pursuit which has so immediately for its object the extension of knowledge to ourselves, and the communication of the blessings which, as Europeans, we enjoy, to a large portion of the human race—now in a state, more or less, of comparative barbarism—is without its charms. The world, we may truly say, is all before us;—we have only to go a few steps from our own doors, and we shall never fail to find objects of research calculated to excite our curiosity, and reward our endeavours to benefit mankind. The calculating utilitarian, and the enthusiastic philanthropist,—the exact mathematician, and the practical statesman,—here meet upon the same ground. The pursuits of geography may not, perhaps, be so tangible or so seductive as some others—as, for example, those of the geologist; but whilst they have no prejudice to encounter, no jealousy of the subversion of supposed truths to fight against, no arbitrary systems to build up, or to dislodge, they contribute more immediately to enlarge the sphere of our observations;—they tend more directly to increase the happiness, and improve the moral welfare of our fellow-creatures;—they give us a deeper and more accurate insight into the history of man—of man, too, in all the diversified stages of civilization;—they teach us to be contented with our own lot, and to bless Providence for the blessings with which we are surrounded;—they excite all the best sensibilities of our nature, by bringing us into contact with savages who can scarcely count upon their fingers, or who with difficulty find wherewithal to supply the merest necessities of life from the weeds of the field, or from the inhabitants of the air, the forest, or the deep; we are gratified by the reflection, that, whilst we introduce our own better habits and better principles to some nations, we are weaning others, if such there be, from the horrors of cannibalism; and whilst we are pointing out to our merchants new points of the globe, to which they may steer, we are the pioneers to guide them in safety through the shoals, by which they were endangered on the shores which they have been in the habit of frequenting.

In an age, too, when the exact sciences are more than ever cultivated—when in all our pursuits, moral, political, statistical, and purely scientific, we are more than ever led to insist upon facts and the most rigid experiment, Geography lays in its claim with confidence to its full share of public attention and support. It is that science which, more than all others, is founded upon facts, and upon facts alone: it admits of no theory, no hypothesis, no analogy, no metaphysical deductions, on why or wherefore. Analogies may indeed be discovered between one continent and another—one system of mountains and another—one range of steppes and another—one line of coast and another—one great fluvial basin and another—one cluster of islands and another—one great continent and another; but none of those can be counted upon *à priori.* We must suppose nothing; we must prophesy nothing; nothing must be taken for granted. Every individual spot must be subjected to the test of local observation—must be measured upon the earth—must be measured in the sky, by night and by day: its relative and its absolute position must be fixed upon unerring data. And these are the principles which mainly distinguish the geographical pursuits of the present age from those of the critical and learned geographers of the last.

But, besides the actual fixing of places on the earth's surface, and the consequent progress towards perfection in the construction of our maps and charts—or, more strictly speaking, in aid of this the great end and aim of Geography—there are various collateral objects of research, of greater or less importance, to which the attention of this Society has been called, to which it has already been given in part, and on some of which we may hope that it will hereafter be more effectually bestowed, when our means are increased, and when the accommodations we can offer to our members shall be improved.

Amongst these succedanea to the improvement of geographical knowledge may be enumerated—First and foremost,

1. The increase of our Geographical Library.

2. The acquisition of Portulani, or the maritime surveys effected in the middle ages, and at the era of the revival of literature.

3. The completion of our collection of Maps, of this and all other countries: of those older maps, too, which, though no longer of use for practical purposes, are of the highest interest in tracing the history of geographical knowledge.

4. The possession of the most useful instruments for measuring distances and angles, and for making astronomical observations, with a view to point out to travellers those which they should take with them, and to instruct them, where it may be required, in the best mode of making use of them.

5. A room in the apartments of the Society where these instruments may be carefully lodged and kept open for public inspection by the members of the society.

6. A larger and more convenient apartment; which, though absolutely indispensable for the securing many of the purposes for which the Society was formed, the funds of the Society are as yet quite unequal to procure.

7. The collecting for preservation, or for collation, of original MS.

documents in various languages, relating to subjects of geographical inquiry; this, it has been said, has hitherto been too much neglected, and it cannot be doubted, that many valuable documents of this description have fallen the prey, like others of an analogous nature, to revolutions, civil tumults, or hostile invasions.

8. The introduction of a more definite and exact nomenclature in geography, which might be admitted, as far as the difference of language would allow, into the vocabulary of other nations, so that all might use an universal geographical language.

9. To see whether some approximation might not be made to more appropriate names for newly discovered lands, and their several divisions and subdivisions.

10. To examine whether it might not be possible to apply generally the decimal divisions of numbers, so as to supersede the specific denominations of measures now peculiar to each country.

11. The introduction into the mechanical process of constructing maps and charts, of some more intelligible and easy mode of denoting elevations, peculiarities of the surface of lands, the velocities and falls of rivers.

These and various other suggestions have been warmly urged upon the consideration of the Council for extending the sphere of the usefulness of the Society; but they are all more or less dependent on our attaining one or two other objects of a more homely description; namely, a very considerable increase to the number of our subscribing Members, or the acquisition of an apartment adequate to our wants: this last is only feasible by the accomplishment of the former, or by a grant from Government. One of the difficulties in the way of our obtaining sufficient accommodation, is the paramount necessity of our retaining a central situation in the metropolis—first, for the convenience of Members, and again, for the advantages of vicinity to the public offices, with which we are in constant, almost daily communication. The Council have long been alive to the deficiency of the rooms we now occupy; but we have as yet no prospect of improving ourselves in this respect without such a large outlay of money, both in premium and in annual rent, as to be entirely beyond our present means: the increase of our numbers is indeed progressive and highly satisfactory, particularly when we take into consideration the increase in the number of other Societies, every year giving birth to them, which have pursuits more or less analogous to our own; and thereby diverting the attention, and drawing largely on the pockets of the public: but, until this difficulty is somehow or other got over, and till we can ensure them more comfortable accommodation than we can at present, we cannot expect the Members of the Society, even those the most qualified and disposed, to give us the benefit of their time and labour.

With this inducement, we might fairly hope in a few years to effect some also of the other results which have been proposed to us by one of our most intelligent and active contributors, and thus farther to redeem the pledges offered in the name of the Society at its foundation; as, for example,—An alphabetical list of all rivers, as far as they are known, together with their tributaries, arranged in a tabular form, comprising the longitude and latitude and elevation of their sources, longitude and latitude of the confluence of their principal affluents, and of their embouchures, length of course, breadth, depth, rapidity of currents, length of navigable course, quantity of water furnished: also of lakes, their elevation above the sea, length, breadth, and surface. A synonymy of the names of places in alphabetical order, giving the position of the places, and the authorities for the different names by which they have been in former times, or are at present, designated. A list of desiderata, or things necessary to be known regarding the geography of any part of the world, of any country or division of a country. A similar list of desiderata for the hydrography of the earth, comprising tides, currents, soundings, temperature of the water, liability to periodical tempests, and regular winds. A critical notice or catalogue raisonné, as far as possible, of all maps and charts extant, specifying the degree of reliance that may be placed upon them, the defects observable, and any details of execution, such as comprehensive arbitrary signs, &c., which it would be advisable to imitate; the scale, the place from which the first meridian is counted, &c. A similar catalogue of Geographical works, from the most ancient down to the present time, indicating, as far as possible, in what public libraries or private collections the rarer works may be consulted.

These and other similar objects are certainly worthy the attention of our Members generally, and more especially of the Council; and whenever our funds shall be materially improved, or the other facilities to which I have alluded shall be placed at our disposal, I have no doubt that some of them, if not all, may be effected: but in the mean time I cordially avail myself of this opportunity to invite, in the name of the Council, any contributions towards them, which our Members may have it in their power to make, assuring them that their labours will be duly appreciated, and the utmost exertions will be made, consistent with our means, to make them available for the extension of the pursuits in which we are engaged.

In the mean time we shall steadily pursue the way in which we have begun; and we shall think we have not laboured in vain, as long as we can accumulate and lay before the public, what is, after all, the end of geographical study, *precise geographical data.*

I cannot conclude this Address without inviting your attention to the liberal and unvarying encouragement which the Royal Geographical Society have received, since their first institution, from Her Majesty's Government. Some of the most valuable papers read at our Meetings and published in our Journals have been communicated from the offices of the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and for the Colonies, and from the Admiralty; frequent mention has been made in our Annual Reports of the large pecuniary assistance given by the Government to the two Expeditions sent into Southern Africa and to British Guayana, under Captain Alexander and Mr. Schomburgk, and I have no doubt that the same liberal confidence will continue to be extended to us, and that the Government and the Society will respectively promote the same harmonious intercourse, equally conducive to the benefit of the public and the extension of geographical knowledge. We are bound also to make similar acknowledgments for the assistance we have received from the Directors of the East India Company, to whom we are indebted for access to the papers of Messrs. Moorcroft and Trebeck, the first accounts of whose travels in the Himálaya and the adjoining countries appeared in our Journal, and who have lately granted to us unlimited access to all their geographical documents, with liberty to give them to the public in our Journal: we with pleasure also acknowledge the uniform co-operation we have at all times received, when occasion offered, from the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. This Company has indeed so recently come before us, as the projectors, and, through their own immediate servants, as the conductors of one of the most successful expeditions for exploring the Arctic regions, that I cannot better relieve you from the kind attention with which you have received my Address, than by the expression of our earnest hopes, that, under this auspicious commencement, we may continue to be fortunate fellow-labourers in the same vineyard, that the farther attempts which this Company are making to complete the survey of the North American coast may be equally crowned with success, and that the solution of this great problem may be speedily added to the many triumphs over difficulties and dangers, which form the wreath of glory around the brow of the British enterprise.